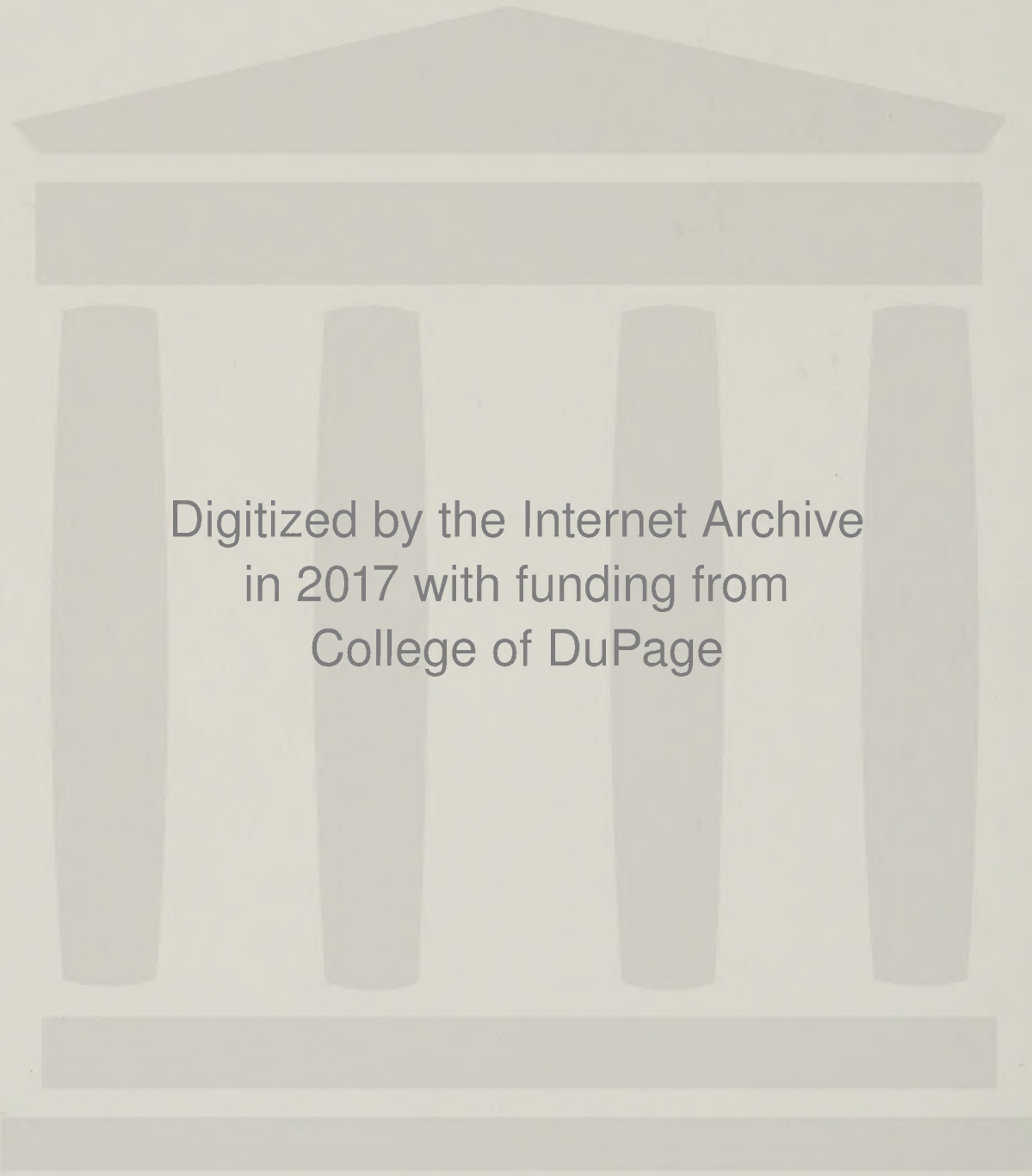


The background of the entire page is a close-up, high-contrast photograph of rose petals. The majority of the petals are a deep, vibrant red, creating a rich, textured field. Interspersed among these are several white petals, which stand out prominently due to their light color. The petals are scattered in various orientations, some showing the delicate veining and edges of the flower's structure. The lighting is soft, highlighting the smooth, slightly waxy surface of the petals.

The Prairie Light Review

flourishes



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The Prairie Light Review



The humanities magazine of the College of DuPage
Fall/Winter 1993 Volume XII Number 1

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The Prairie Light Review is published biannually through the sponsorship of the Communications and Humanities Divisions, and by the funding of Student Activities.

The Prairie Light Review welcomes for consideration original fiction, poetry, drama, essays, articles, photography, and artwork from students, faculty, staff, and the community. All submissions are reviewed anonymously. Submission guidelines are available upon request. Please address all correspondence to: The Prairie Light Review, c/o Student Activities, SRC 1019, College of DuPage, 22nd Street and Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL, 60137.

Cover photograph by S. Gayle Stevens

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The poet who embarks on the creation of the poem (as I know by experience), begins with the aimless sensation of a hunter about to embark on a night hunt through the remotest of forests. Unaccountable dread stirs in his heart. To reassure himself—and it is well that he do so—he drinks a glass of clear water and inscribes...black flourishes with his pen point.

Federico Garcia Lorca

flourishes

Old Men

Bill Hennessey

Whoever said old men
are graceful and age
with dignity is not one,
nor will become one.

Old men waddle.
Their dignity is dressed
in the same outdated clothes
worn on walks to the paperstand
or swaying to church.

Old men talk to anyone
who'll listen,
about the War
and the Job.

Old men volunteer.
They shuffle into classrooms,
read and listen to children, take them
to recess and offer to fix things
that break.

Old men have pride, not grace.
They age like backyard trees,
standing erect as possible
with wind blown dust on their feet.



Cycle Of Silence

Anne Byrnes

Yes, it is October
And the chill call
of south-bound geese
skeining the sky
raises molecules of melodic memories:
Taffy-apple-spun-sweetness
haunting an inner child,
And wind-songs whispering
through elemental corridors,
surrendering by a sudden shore
where embers of cosmic campfires
curl into eternal sleep.

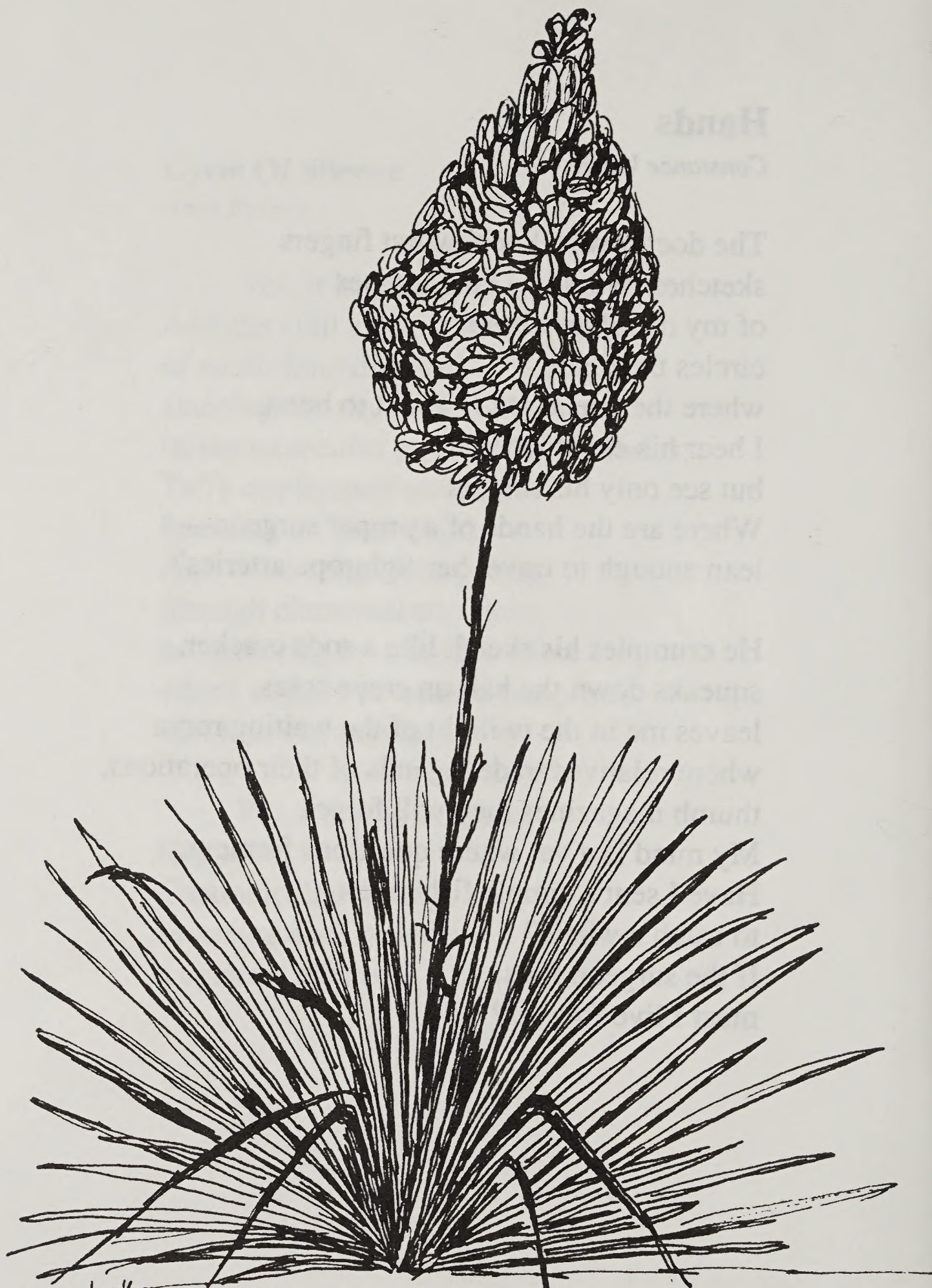
Yes, it is a grindstone,
forgotten,
Catatonically turning,
escorting each moment:
a cycle of silence.

Hands

Constance Vogel

The doctor with knockwurst fingers
sketches rivers and land masses
of my daughter's brain,
circles the place
where the aneurysm is about to burst.
I hear his explanation
but see only his fingers.
Where are the hands of a proper surgeon—
lean enough to travel her tightrope arteries?

He crumples his sketch like a soda cracker,
squeaks down the hall on crepe soles,
leaves me in the twilight of the waiting room
where relatives trade legends of their operations,
thumb magazines they will forget.
My mind is a vat where questions ferment.
Have I sent a simple fisherman
to catch a whale?
If the surgeon fails,
must I live forever?



247 ① *Yucca*

Desert Yucca

Is There Justice Only Among Lizards?

Larry Turner

You jog; I waddle.
You snore; I turn,
find no position
comfortable for me and my growing cargo.
Just keep your praise
of my glowing radiance
to yourself.

Oh, to be a whiptail lizard,
wrap my gravid body around yours,
excite you, drive you
to ovulation and parthenogenesis,
fix you the way you fixed me.

Ibid

Anne Byrnes

Wandering in vague, uncommitted moods,
Watching faces webbed with woe,
The Writer portrays vain vicissitudes
Of derelicts who parade for show.

His words are fetters, stiff and fast,
Forged with ink both winter and fall,
While bound to the dim, unremembered past,
Smothering lives with their somber pall.

The Author, creator, imitates life,
Assigning to pages these images rare.
Phantasmagoria of poignant strife,
Pale lines extol his misplaced care.

No Renaissance journey through a New Age
But copied like cyphers upon a page.

1,250 Feet Over Kuwait

Daniel Harrison

The screaming of the jet engine and the equally deafening scream of pain are now blocked out by an intense rushing sound. The air in the aircraft is moving. The doors are now open. The two metal doors of the aircraft swing upward to the top of the plane giving us a good view of the outside.

It was dusk when we entered the C-141, and the interior of the plane was illuminated with red light. Now, as the doors are opened, it looks like two black holes. It is pitch black outside. Any sort of objects outside the plane are in a blur of light grey.

"One minute!" Yeah! Time to go out the door. The men begin to get whipped into a frenzy of fear and adrenaline. My panting is shorter and faster. My pulse rate is now rising to match the increase of oxygen in my blood.

"Stand by!" The jumpmaster steps away from the door and points the first stormtrooper out the door. It's only thirty seconds to the green light. Time to meet God. The jets give out a bone-chilling howl as they slash through the air. The men are now high on adrenaline and everyone rattles their hooks on the steel cable in a sort of chant.

"Green light! Go! Go! Go!" The light on the wall goes from red to green, and all hell breaks loose. Every man is shuffling to the door and hurling himself into the abyss. As I get closer to the door, I can hear the hellish rushing sound of the air at 197 mph. I see the man ahead of me disappear into the blackness outside the door. I am only inches behind him, and now he's gone. I hold my breath, and every muscle in my body contracts.

In a C-141, you don't jump out the door. On high performance aircraft, you are sucked out the door by the outside air. As I step through the door, I can feel the hand of the Devil grab me tight and snatch me out into the cold black. The wind cuts throughout my clothes and whistles around my body. The drowsiness and weakness I felt in the heat and dead air of the aircraft are cleansed from me. I am at the apex of attention, and I feel like tempered steel. I am out of the aircraft, hurling my frail bone and flesh through the sky at over 190 mph. The sensation is

much like that of entering the cold water of a pool for the first time from a three-meter diving board on a hot Chicago day in August. As my body spins, I lock my eyes open to keep my sense of reality. I see the bottom of the plane, the earth, the plane, and then—snap! My main chute opens. The sudden opening of the main lift chute yanks me to an abrupt halt. It is the equivalent to a 1.0G shock to my body. The blur of everything is instantly brought into focus. I feel re-born.

All around me are the dark shadows of other stormtroopers on their descent to earth. It is a forty-five second ride from 700 feet to the ground—not that much time. But it seems like an eternity every time. It is an eerie sight—hundreds of Gargoyles on leathery wings descending to the countryside. There is nothing like it. I will never forget how it felt.



Audrey Van Kirk



The Hidden

White Dress-Shirt Holy Ghost

Robert J. Parran

He comes in the middle of the night,
a white messenger from heaven,
a kind reaper,
so kind that his extended hand
is irresistible.

Your fingers reach past the telephone silhouette
and beyond the dark edge of the nightstand,
where the alarm clock has lost its time
but gained delirium.

Your hand goes to his hand,
and the distance between is electric,
like in the art book pictures
of The Birth of Man.

Still you reach
toward your benign rescuer,
but as sleep recedes in favor of reality,
it becomes apparent that your savior
is nothing more
than tomorrow's white dress shirt
neatly draped over your chair.

The Deserted Park

Richard Calisch

Tree

Not
a tree,
dead,
what was a tree.
Black
leafless twigs
against brown autumn,
it does not bend;
fingers snap, drop
to the grassless
dust, lie
motionless.
This tree does not remember
summer.

Fountain

The fountain
bleeds quietly,
the water, drop by drop,
rusty
dark.
The wounded statue
stands above the
seepage,
armless,
staring across the park,
a dying soldier
searching the field
for comrades.

The Deserted Park

Bench

The park bench shows green only
tentatively.

Not even green, but what is left
when green
sinks to despair.

On the slats the paint has
yearred
away

growing the lead grey
undercoat that used to be
this city's trademark.

The rusty bolts are giddy
by comparison. Concrete stanchions
anchor
this quarter-ton of furniture
against time's passing.

This is not
a bench for sitting:
forgotten
sentinel
of a deserted park.

The Poet's Aneurysm (The Final Overthought)

Robert J. Parran

A horse
fell through
the floorboards of my head
and now
all I can see
is red.

Reconstruction

Robert J. Parran

My head
is closed for repairs
and I have no idea
when it will reopen.
It is cluttered
with ladders
and tarpaulins
and all kinds of junk.
Scaffoldings line the walls
and reach the roof beams
where the sky
is wide open,
a great hole created
from the damage
of the falling horse.

Other Voices

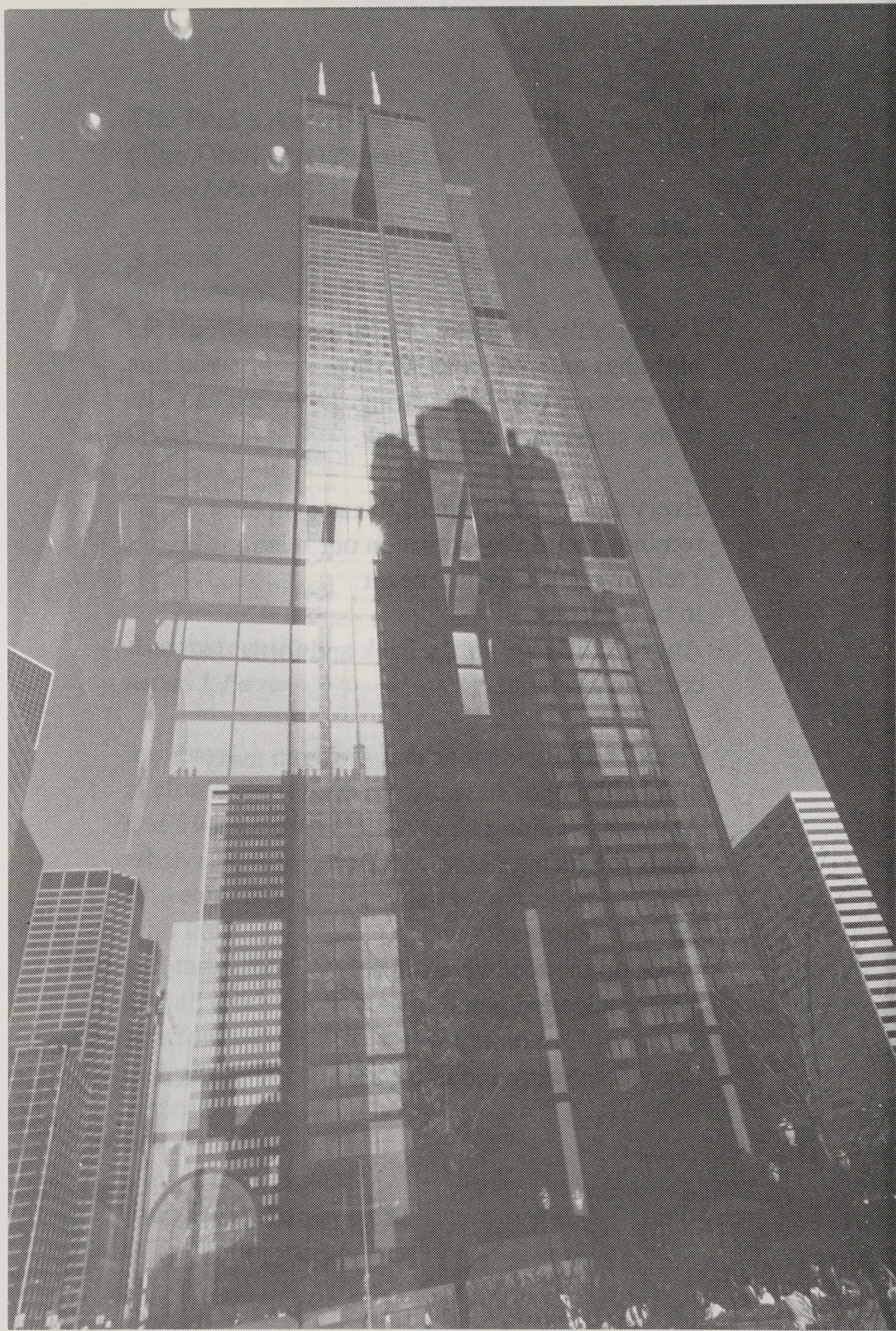
Constance Vogel

I wait for my daughter long after
night has entered its REM stage.
My eyes are dry from staring
at the same page of my book.

Every creak and groan of furnace pipes
reminds me of the strains on our relationship.
I tell myself I was not meant
to be a mother.
Angry words we volley back and forth
cost me too much.

Fears of an accident or that she's run away
nibble like mice in walls.
At dawn a wailing siren
sends me racing to the window.

The phone rings.
I pick up the receiver as if
it were a loaded gun.
She says, "I'm on my way."
Her words warm me like a morning cup of tea.



Bob Rivoire

And Now?
Robert N. Georgalas

CHARACTERS

DEBRA An advertising executive in her mid-thirties.
ROBERT An advertising executive in his late thirties.
WAITER A man in his early twenties.

Scene is an outdoor cafe along the Chicago River somewhere between Michigan and Columbus Avenues, early October, 6 P.M.

Debra is sitting alone at a small table, working on a report that rests on her lap. On the table is an empty wine glass. She marks something here and there on the paper, then glances at her watch and looks around, as if hoping to see the person she's supposed to meet enter the cafe. A waiter comes to her table.

WAITER: May I get you another white wine?

DEBRA: No. I'm fine for now. I'd rather wait till my friend shows.

WAITER, *removing the empty wine glass* : Well, he glances around at the cafe, you'll have no trouble spotting him.

DEBRA: Yes, it is pretty empty here. In fact, I thought you were closed when I first came down the steps.

WAITER, *wiping the table*: October. The crowds disappear. The wind sweeps them north to Halstead or Lincoln Park. All we get now are tourists, like that couple over there, *he nods to a point offstage*, or a wayward student from Loyola. *He nods in another direction offstage.*

DEBRA, *her eyes following the direction of his nods*: Well, she rubs her arm, it is somewhat chilly.

WAITER: Yeah. We'll be shutting down for the season at the end of

this week. I'll be working up at a place on Division then.

DEBRA: What time do you close tonight?

WAITER, *looking back to a clock somewhere offstage*: Oh, 'bout half an hour or so. You sure about the wine?

DEBRA: Yes. No. I mean, sure. Another. Why not?

WAITER: Be right back. *He exits.*

Debra goes back to her report, but it's obvious her mind is elsewhere. After a moment, she puts down her pen and leans back in her chair, playing with the necklace around her neck and staring off at the river. Suddenly, Robert enters in a hurry.

ROBERT: Sorry, I'm late, Deb. I got snagged by Lynch on my way out. He's still worried about the fact that there's no direct mail in the media plan. Thinks Petty won't buy it if we don't schedule at least one drop after the awareness campaign breaks.

WAITER, *returning with Debra's drink and setting it before her*: May I bring you anything, sir?

ROBERT, *loosening his tie*: Sure. How about some port? You have Sandeman's?

WAITER: I believe so. Yes.

ROBERT: Okay. A Sandeman's then. Thanks.

The waiter exits.

DEBRA, *putting her report into her portfolio*: They're closing in thirty minutes. And I've got to catch the seven tonight. Rick's expecting me to go over the financials on the house.

ROBERT, *somewhat surprised, but still controlled*: The house? But I

thought....

DEBRA: Yes?

ROBERT: Well, just that...

WAITER, *bringing Robert's drink and placing it before him:*
Anything else?

ROBERT: No. We're fine for now. Thanks.

The waiter nods and exits.

ROBERT, *taking a sip of his drink and glancing around at the empty cafe:* Sorry about this place. It was the only one I knew that was so convenient to the office. *He rubs his hands together.* I didn't think it would be this cold tonight. *He takes another sip of his drink.*

DEBRA, *after a moment:* And now?

ROBERT *looks at her and lets the question linger for a moment.*
Then, more as a statement than an affirmation: Yes. Now.

Debra sips her wine. Robert rolls his glass between his palms. A moment passes.

DEBRA: Nothing's without its price.

ROBERT: True. But isn't the price ours to set? A least this time?

DEBRA, *looking down at her hand and toying with the wedding band on her finger:* God. We keep talking about this as if it were a stock transaction.

ROBERT, *laughing softly:* Would that it were. *He reaches inside his jacket pocket, removes a cigarette, and lights it.*

DEBRA: Isn't that the jacket you had made in Phuket?

ROBERT, *grasping the lapel and looking at it*: Yes. It is.

DEBRA: The one the tailor in that tin roofed hut made? When you and I sneaked out of the convention?

ROBERT, *laughing*: Remember how we went back there earlier than we were supposed to and found him stuffing the shoulders with newspaper? Son of a bitch cut the price in half after you stopped screaming.

DEBRA: Yes. I think I cost him two months worth of newspapers. *They smile over the memory for a moment and take another sip of their drinks.* Funny, somehow I never thought it would get to this point.

ROBERT, *playing with a book of matches on the table*: Are you sorry?

DEBRA: Are you?

ROBERT, *tilts his head up and blows a column of smoke toward the sky*: I wish I knew this town better. Knew a place where this conversation would fit in the atmosphere. Hell, if it were Rome, or Madrid or Geneva even.

DEBRA: But it's here. And maybe it's harder because this is where we live. Where they stay while we float around the globe. On business.

ROBERT, *sits still for a moment, then turns in his chair and looks out toward Lake Michigan*: Big fucking lake.

DEBRA: What?

ROBERT, *facing her again, tentatively*: We could turn back. It's not too late. We could continue as if....

DEBRA: As if what? It never happened? You want us to pretend?

ROBERT, *rubbing the back of his neck*: No. *He pauses*. That's hard enough to do with her. It would be impossible with you.

DEBRA, *considers his words for a moment, then gets up, walks toward the river, and watches it for a few moments*: My father took me fishing in a river once. When I was a little girl.

ROBERT, *getting up and walking over to her side*: Did you like it? Maybe we could arrange something in Germany next week. *He drops his cigarette and crushes it underfoot*.

DEBRA: I remember how cold the water was and how I kept losing my balance each time I tried to cast.

ROBERT: Well, you were a kid.

DEBRA, *after a period of silence*: They know Bob. I can see it in his eyes when he looks at you. I can hear it in her voice when she greets me.

ROBERT, *shaking his head and laughing softly*: Look at us. We can't even say their names, for godsakes. Are we guilty? Are we going to let what we ought to feel override what we do feel?

DEBRA, *testing*: How do we feel?

ROBERT: What do you mean how do we feel? Is this one-sided all of a sudden?

DEBRA: No. It's just that you never actually came out and said.

ROBERT: Nor did you.

DEBRA: I thought my actions covered that.

ROBERT: And mine didn't?



Bob Rivoire

DEBRA: Of course they did, but— *She hesitates.* I need to know it's the same as it was the first time. In Spain.

ROBERT: You mean the night at that restaurant behind the Palacio Real?

DEBRA, *remembering it fondly*: The Taberna del Alabardero.

ROBERT: Right. Where I spilled the wine and....

DEBRA: I knew we were going to make love that night.

ROBERT: Yes. I remember that. You were magnificent. I always meant to ask you where you learned that thing with the ice cube.

DEBRA: I'm glad the sex is good.

ROBERT, *sensing her undertone*: Wait. You're not insinuating that I'm in this only for the sex? If it were only for that, do you think I would be going through this? Shouldn't the fact that I'm here tell you it's more?

DEBRA: How do I know that? How do you know it about me?

ROBERT: We have to trust each other's words.

DEBRA: Didn't Rick and Laura do that once? Trust our words?

ROBERT: Things change. Sometimes you can't see the curves in the road till you're right on them.

DEBRA: I've had five years with Rick.

ROBERT: And I've done ten with Laura. I'm not saying that what either of us had with them was bad. It wasn't. But, I didn't know you then. And at the time, based on what I did know, Laura seemed best. My opinion's different now.

DEBRA: Rick's been good to me. *After a brief pause:* Oh, maybe I didn't think of him as my type at first, but I was getting older and....

ROBERT: Look. We don't have to dissect our marriages for each other. I don't have to tell you how Laura didn't live up to my expectations and you don't have to tell me how you compromised with Rick. All we have to do is decide about us.

DEBRA: And what about them?

The bells on the Michigan Avenue bridge start to clang. They both look off in the direction of the sound.

ROBERT: Brave and hearty lads off to sea.

DEBRA, *after a moment, when the bells stop:* Would you ever marry me?

ROBERT, *taking another cigarette from his pocket:* Isn't that question a bit premature? *He tries to light the cigarette, but the first match won't ignite. Annoyed, he tosses it and tries another. This one catches.*

DEBRA: But if it's gone in six months?

ROBERT, *replacing the matches in his jacket:* Isn't it wiser to go through this first? We can worry about the future when it comes.

DEBRA: But what if it comes the way I said?

ROBERT, *avoiding the question, he looks in the direction of the student:* Look at that kid. Writing and writing. *He shakes his head as if recalling a surer time.* When I was his age, I thought I had it all figured out. Everything.

DEBRA, *softly:* If it comes the way I said?

ROBERT: Then we face the truth and go on with our lives.

DEBRA, *wraps her arms around herself, reminding us of the chill in the evening air*: I'm not sure I'm willing to take that risk.

ROBERT, *after taking a long drag on his cigarette*: That's honest. *He runs a hand through his hair*. I'm not sure where it leaves us, though. Does it mean we go back to being friends? Or do we plod on till circumstances make the decision for us?

DEBRA: If I said it was over right now, would you go back to Laura?

ROBERT: Would you go back to Rick?

DEBRA: I'm too old to make a mistake. You're a man. It's different for you. There will always be someone. Those are just the odds. *She walks back to the table. He follows after a moment. Then, once they are both seated*: May we order another drink?

Robert turns to look offstage where the waiter is. He raises two fingers, points down at the glasses, and nods to indicate the waiter has understood. Then, after a beat: You're quite beautiful, you know.

DEBRA, *reaching out to brush something from his jacket sleeve*: I always remember the first time I ever felt the urge to kiss you. Before Spain, I mean. The night we were working on that fast food promotion and we got stuck on the elevator. You made me laugh so hard I forgot I was claustrophobic.

ROBERT: We were talking about the suits, the guys who had everyone fooled into thinking they were brilliant. *He laughs once, as if recalling it more vividly now*. I remember I wanted to impress you as to how cultured I was, so I told you the story of William Ireland, the man who wrote letters and plays and fooled everyone into believing they were composed by Shakespeare.

The waiter enters with their drinks and places them on the table:

Another ten minutes, folks.

DEBRA *nods*. *He removes the empty glasses, then exits. Robert takes a swallow of his drink.*

DEBRA, *as if thinking aloud*: We have obligations to them, don't we? And there would be talk.

ROBERT: Talk. Of course. *He pauses*. You know, once upon a time, I wanted to be a writer. I tried for a while, without much success. And everyone told me I should let it pass. That I should grow up and think about my obligations. Being weak, I listened. After all, the advice was coming from sager voices. But now, looking back, I regret that choice more than anything, because by making it, I never gave myself the chance to discover what might have been. I don't want to look back a year from now, Deb, and regret the choice we make tonight.

DEBRA, *toys with her wine glass for a moment, contemplating*: Do you remember the wall? The one in Salamanca. The one it took us so long to find?

ROBERT: The one at the university? With the frog perched atop the skull? *Debra nods yes*. There was a legend about it or something.

DEBRA: Whoever spotted the frog amidst all the other carvings would find happiness for the rest of his life.

ROBERT: That's right. I remember one of the students telling us.

DEBRA: And neither of us found it. She had to point it out.

ROBERT, *laughing at where he sees her eyes going*: So? What does that mean? That we're not entitled to try for happiness? *He reaches out and takes her hand*. I think we can be good for each other. I truly do. *After a beat*: Every time I see you with Rick, every time, I know I could be better for you.

DEBRA: Rick's a good man. *Then, feeling as if she needs to defend the point further to herself:* He is.

ROBERT: And Laura's a fine woman. They're just not you and I.

DEBRA, *after another pause:* Rick and I were talking about children. I was never fair to him in that regard. Travelling around all the time. *He pauses. Then, as if to suggest the idea was not one-sided:* Not that I don't want them also; I do.

ROBERT: There's time.

DEBRA, *half smiling:* If I were twenty-five again, I would believe that.

ROBERT, *extinguishing his cigarette:* I wish I could give you guarantees.

DEBRA: Nothing's guaranteed. I know. *They are silent for a time.* Laura's my friend.

ROBERT: I think of Rick as mine.

DEBRA: I...I'm just afraid that I'll wake up one morning and you'll be a stranger. Someone I don't know.

ROBERT: Why?

DEBRA: Because it could be what happens to Laura. To Rick.

ROBERT, *squeezing her hand:* I can only tell you that I want this. I swear. I'm not looking to hurt people. I'm trying to find something that I can hang onto. Something that's right for me.

DEBRA, *catching sight of his wristwatch:* It's getting late. Rick will be waiting at the station. He's anxious about the house. Laura will...

ROBERT: Forget the house. Please.

DEBRA, *searching his eyes, beginning to feel the press of her own tears*: I want to believe you. I do. I want to believe that a thirty-six year old woman has another chance at love. Love rather than acquiescence.

ROBERT, *urging*: Then try.

DEBRA, *closing her eyes for a count*: I'll miss the train.

ROBERT, *squeezing her wrist as he feels her start to rise*: Then miss the train.

DEBRA: Swear you won't hurt me.

The waiter enters, but keeps a distance.

ROBERT: I swear. I love you.

The waiter coughs. They look up.

WAITER: We're closing in a few minutes. Will there be anything else? *He holds a check to his side.*

DEBRA *looks hard into Robert's eyes. He nods as if to say "please" again. She takes a breath. Then, slowly, to the waiter*: No. I think we have what we need.

ROBERT: Yes. I think we do.

CURTAIN

the blush
proposal
of dawn
evolves
and
succumbs
with
naturalness;
i simulate
its piercing
voice.
i
withdraw
and become
akin,
again, to the
revolving door
of my
consciousness.
its
silhouettes
of swirling
cascades
coalesce
and
allude
to heal my
bleeding
vulnerability.

—Gala M. Pierce

Tanka

Katie Keierleber

icy chill silvers
limbs, delicate, shining in
solstice strong sunshine
sky—distant, china blue; my
breath melts a perfect snowflake



Bob Rivoire

Marian with the silver grey hair
lounges in the seat of a San Martin pool bar,
oversized shades on her life-worn face.
A chair away, he spins a chain of tales
as unctuous as the gel in his sparse, expensive hair.
Prey to the Mount Gay in her glass,
Marian guffaws an octave too high,
and his smile, the emblem of a man
who pays homage to the island's machine wheels,
grows like araminate cord,
for he has time between shifts,
and Marian, haunted by visions of a life
that never was, has just accepted his offer
to tour an unspoiled cove on the French side.

Sun Circle

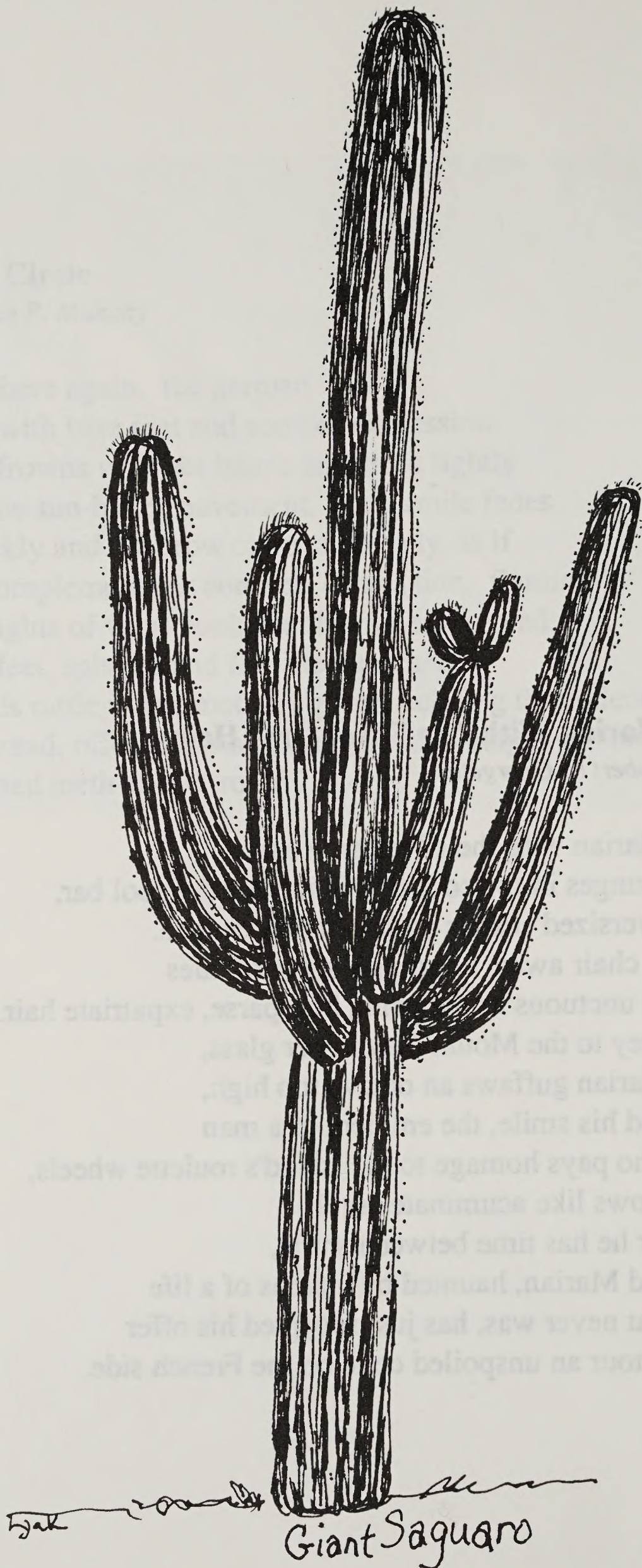
Joseph P. Mahony

it is here again. the german
girl with bare feet and somber expression.
she frowns with her hands and steps lightly
on the sun-baked pavement. each smile fades
quickly and the crow caws tauntingly, as if
to complement her concrete expression. flaming
thoughts of what-could-be flow in excess and
the feet, splayed and flat, step quicker.
beads rattle in her mother's purse, echoing the staleness
of bread, offered almost haltingly to a hungry mouth with
stained teeth and sorrowful lips.

Marian With The Silver Grey Hair

Robert N. Georgalas

Marian with the silver grey hair
lounges in the cool of a Sint Maarten pool bar,
oversized shades on her life-worn face.
A chair away, he spins a skein of tales
as unctuous as the gel in his sparse, expatriate hair.
Prey to the Mount Gay in her glass,
Marian guffaws an octave too high,
and his smile, the emblem of a man
who pays homage to the island's roulette wheels,
grows like acuminate coral,
for he has time between shifts,
and Marian, haunted by visions of a life
that never was, has just accepted his offer
to tour an unspoiled cove on the French side.



Giant Saguaro

I am a candle
made of desire

I sit and wait
for a flame

to set me

free

You are the fire

Wanting

to set me free

We meet

and my desire

melts over

you as

I escape

—Angel Nance

Circling
(For A.S.)

Helen G. Reed

The campers listened as hunters
and dogs followed the bear.

All day the baying moved
with the shadows through peaks
that nuzzled like hungry cubs
at any low-hanging cloud.

The mountain played
with the dog-plaints—
a ventriloquist
changing their tones,
bringing them nearer,
twisting them out, away.

The campers felt those things
that happen in mountains—
the falling upward into blue vertigo,
a sun inferred but seldom seen,
subtle inversions of time.

They kept to their daily routine,
always aware of the circling,
unseen, out there.

At sunset the clouds shifted,
lifted a little, bloodied beneath
by screams, howling, shots.
Those at the fire averted eyes,
plummeted into silence.

The next day the campers, hiking,
marked where vultures' slow black
circling carved the sky.
They found the hunters eating,
snouts in plates—snuffling, grunting—
big teeth—yellow as squash—
snaggled in grins, spiky.
Blue-barreled guns leaned
like spears.

The bear hung, splayed
by ropes between two trees
in a clearing, his blood
a red-brown shadow below—
penumbra on the clearing's moon—

all the wilderness
of him
leached away.

List Of Things To Do

David B. Ruzak

pick up laundry

write letter to Kat

haircut

return shoes

sense of belonging

sense of worth

sense of self

drink more water

finish INQ test

water plants

test waters

coffee

fan

apotheosis

Foundation and Empire

meet Priscilla

cool it with PB & MD

focus

expand

lower

tighten

throw out cactus

cash in pennies

deposit refund

tape Star Trek

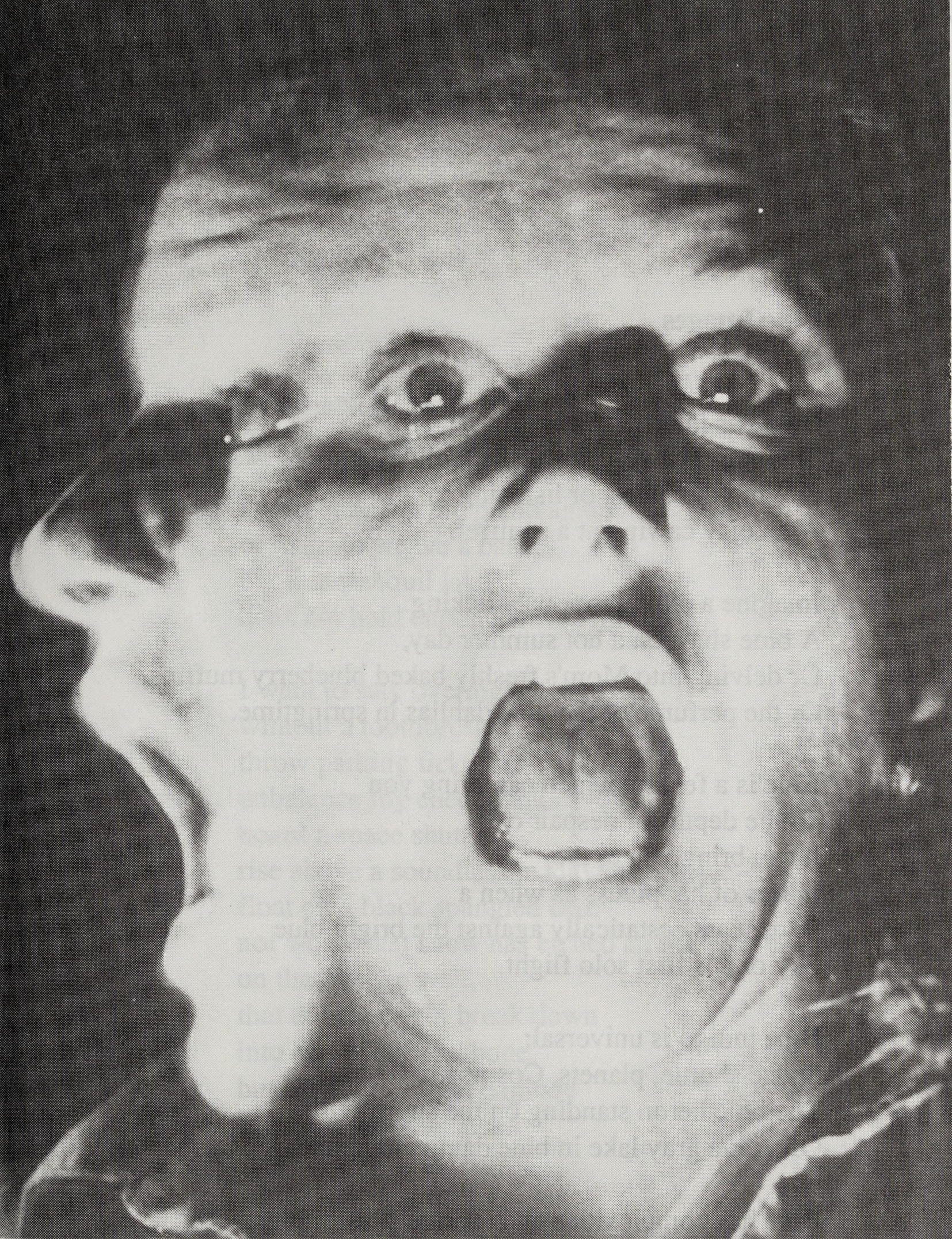
nap today

call PLR

batteries

hope

angst



Christie Chew-Wallace

As The Last Grains Tumbled
Through The Hourglass

Blue Images

Joan Katai

Blue has infinite possibilities:
The plaintive voice of Billie Holiday
Singing the blues, or listening to
A bluejay cawing at a squirrel.

Imagine a child lusciously licking
A blue slush on a hot summer day,
Or delving into Mom's freshly baked blueberry muffins,
Or the perfume of the blue dahlias in springtime.

Blue is a feeling which can bring you
To the depths of despair or
It can bring you to the
Spires of happiness as when a
Pilot soars ecstatically against the bright blue
Sky on his first solo flight.

Blue indigo is universal:
Space shuttle, planets, Cosmos.
The blue heron standing on the shore
Of a blue gray lake in blue damp November.

Blue has complexities and infinite possibilities.

Empty Nest

Constance Vogel

I could take up the piano again
or learn to weave a basket,
but that tranquil lake
does not hold enough waves for me.

I want to stay overnight
without a toothbrush,
throw parking tickets in the street,
unbalance my checkbook,
board a space shuttle,
rise above a soundless patchwork world,
float on a black spangled bed;
not worry that snow has etched an ink blot
on the kitchen wall,
that the cat might break down
into bits of fur and bone,
but my lungs might explode
from the air of silence.



Bob Rivoire

A Squatter's Faith

Tom Montgomery

Again the rain

pings, drums, machine guns
corrugated rhythms
dented melodies
that you don't feel
like dancing to.

Again the rain

runs to the three holes
you couldn't plug.
Three steady dribbles
like cold rusty urine
wake your children to a different nightmare
startle the rats off the rice sack
rust your bolo and piece of mirror
seep into your bible
saturate the delicate pages
which claim even the rain
comes from God.

This is the problem
you can't solve.

Not the bulldozers
or moving every month,
not the warrantless searches
and arrests,
not the constant scrounge
for plywood and plastic,

but God's three steady dribbles,
that collect in brown puddles
that the pigs lap
the kittens lick
the chickens peck
the lizards dodge
that you perpetually sweep
back out
into the unending night.

My Little Margy

Lee Johnson

In the dream, I put on new
shoes and my best face.

I make a dewy, dandelion bouquet and wear
a dress of Queen Anne's lace.

I wake up without disturbing the thread of my dream, wearing
a pink sweatsuit with red make-believe lips that
say, "SQUEEZE ME FOR A KISS!" Misty faces
float with me in the shower and ask why get married.

Love is a bad dog,
always jumping up on me.

Pretty knees on a train, collecting eyes
like alms.

Pet me, pet me. On a train
like stray dogs.

Lips in the halfflight, barking up the wrong tree.

Lies, all lies.

She's not even listening; he'll

never understand. Love is

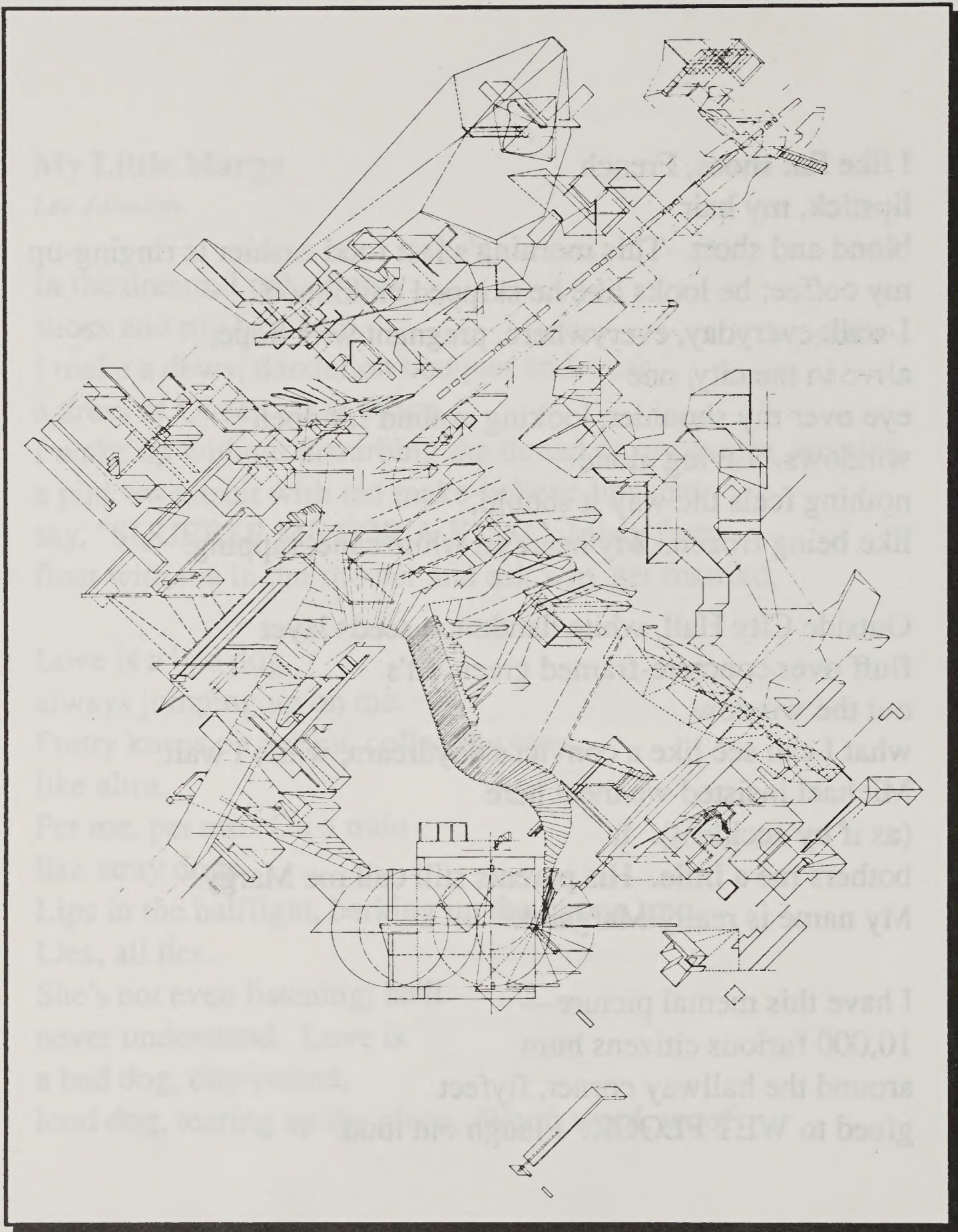
a bad dog, city-pound,

loud dog, tearing up the place. Woof, woof, woof.

I like flat shoes, French
lipstick, my hair
blond and short. This morning's fast food cashier is ringing-up
my coffee; he looks like he skipped childhood.
I walk everyday, everywhere, pregnant with hope,
alive in the city, one
eye over my shoulder, looking around for open
windows. Living alone
nothing feels the way it should,
like being frozen. My heart's a white cane, rapping.

Outside City Hall, white dandelion seeds layer
fluff over concrete-framed green. It's
out the window,
what I can see like a convict's daydream, while I wait.
Michael insisted we meet here
(as if by accident). It
bothers me a little. His parents still call me Margy.
My name is really Margaret.

I have this mental picture—
10,000 furious citizens hum
around the hallway corner, flyfeet
glued to WET FLOOR. I laugh out loud.



David Leary
Mark Clary
Mark O'Bryan

Spatial Analysis—First Floor

Surrender

Katie Keierleber

Quiet in the room, lights off, shades down
he awaits sleep with nervous anxiety.
Slowly he closes his eyes and they spring wide.
His mind turns over the uneventful day,
trying to forget the approaching night.
What will come when he surrenders thought
to his subconscious?

Dreams haunt him: a man, a devil man chases him
up unknown stairs; black-scarred, knifing, reaching hands
wanting to hurt but not to kill have him pleading
against a wall, trying to deflect the silver blade with words.
He knows his cries will be ignored.
He knows innocents will pretend not to see him.
A man who offers hope will be stabbed instantly.

He tosses and turns, kicking the blankets,
and then says a short prayer before going
to meet this anti-Christ.
As his eyes close heavily, he plummets
into the dream death-world.

He curses his fatigue because he knows
he will soon wake up
screaming.

